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Senate Approves Hagel Resolution on Fragile X Awareness

Washington, D.C. -- The Senate last night approved a resolution sponsored by U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE) designating Saturday, July 22, 2000, as "National Fragile X Awareness Day."

"By setting aside a day devoted to Fragile X awareness, the Senate has acknowledged the importance of preventing this heartbreaking disorder," said Hagel. "Only through awareness will Congress and the public devote the additional resources necessary to develop treatments and an eventual cure for those suffering from this debilitating disorder."

Senate Joint Resolution 268, sponsored by Senator Hagel and Senator John Edwards (D-NC), passed the Senate by unanimous consent on Tuesday night. Senators Hagel and Edwards were joined by 39 bipartisan cosponsors in forwarding this resolution establishing July 22, 2000, as "National Fragile X Awareness Day." The date coincides with a national conference on Fragile X being held in Los Angeles.

"I am confident that American ingenuity and medical technology will eventually prevent the occurrence of genetic disorders like Fragile X," added Hagel. "But only with increased public awareness will enough resources be provided for sufferers to get help sooner rather than later."

In 1991, medical researchers identified the cause of Fragile X as a defective gene that fails to produce a specific protein necessary for proper brain function. Fragile X affects one in every 2,000 boys and one in every 4,000 girls. Those afflicted with this condition often suffer mild to severe mental retardation, anxiety, seizures, and a variety of learning disorders. Most children with Fragile X will require a lifetime of specialized care at an estimated cost of over \$2 million each.

Senator Hagel also recently included language in the Senate-passed Labor, Health and Human Services appropriations bill to direct the National Institutes of Health to coordinate research and funding for Fragile X.